

LITTLE-KNOWN NOTABLE RECORDS OF CORNISH COLEOPTERA

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MY GOOD FRIEND Keith C. Lewis kindly sent me not long ago a copy of the beetle list for Cornwall, by Prof. J. Clark (1906), in the *Victoria County History* series. Despite its early date, I find in it a number of records of more than ordinary interest which have been very widely, indeed it appears often completely, overlooked in the later literature; and to which I consider it worth drawing attention. In particular they have virtually all been missed by Fowler & Donisthorpe (1913) in their extensive list of additional localities and records brought together in the supplementary volume of Canon Fowler's great work; likewise in the comprehensive review of Hyman & Parsons (1992); and by the present writer. (As far as I am aware no later beetle list for the county has been published.) The following notes are in the order in which the species chosen for comment occur in the list, and include a few additional points of interest.

Carabus intricatus L.: p.188. This rare south-western species is generally thought to have been found in Cornwall only in recent times. However, Clark's entry reads: "Under the bark of trees near Carthamartha; two taken by the Rev. G. Lupton Allen at sugar, near Millook [i.e. Millhook], in 1905". The two places are widely separated, being near Launceston and Bude respectively, in the extreme east of the county; the latter must be our northernmost record so far, widely remote from the nearest Devonshire centres.

Calosoma sycophanta (L.): p.187. "A single specimen captured running along the pavement at Fowey, June, 1899". Fowler & Donisthorpe include a record from Penzance (Rudd).

Nebria complanata (L.): p.188. Not recognised as Cornish today. Yet Clark's rather curious record (for a normally highly gregarious beetle) is: "One specimen obtained at Bude, and two at Tresco, Scilly, under the fronds of *Asplenium marinum* at the foot of some rocks". The second is particularly interesting and can by no means be dismissed as erroneous, the beetle being utterly unmistakable.

Diachromus germanus (L.): p.188. "Taken on the pathway, near Falmouth station, in June, 1904". Of special interest is the late date, 65 years after that given by Hyman & Parsons as the last recorded in Britain "about 1839" – a date which seems, however, too early by two or three decades. This colourful beetle, presumed long extinct here, was possibly always adventitious like *Calosoma sycophanta*. The above appears to be the sole 20th-century find.

Pterostichus aethiops (Panz.): p.188. "Altarnun" – 8 miles S.W. of Launceston. No further details for this moorland and mountain species, known from Devon (Dartmoor and Exmoor districts) northwards.

Bembidion lunatum (Dufts.): p.189. "Four specimens obtained near Morwinstow in 1904; apparently the only record for the south-west of England." It is remarkable that the latter statement remains true today, nearly a century later; as the distribution-map in Luff (1998:63), which shows the record, confirms.

Emus hirtus (L.): p.192. Besides the well-known record of one at the Lizard, autumn 1888, by A.H. Jenkin (Fowler & Donisthorpe, p.232, give the locality as Redruth near Lizard Point), Clark mentions a specimen taken close to Falmouth in 1901, and a few days later another on horse droppings nearby; and one more near Swanpool, on the coast near Falmouth, the same year.

Thanatophilus dispar (Herbst): p.194. "Occurs sparingly under refuse in the Penzance district." No record of this rarity for the south-west in Hyman & Parsons.

Olibrus particeps Muls.: p.195. "Some numbers by sweeping in Whitsand Bay, Sept. 1895 (Keys)." Currently excluded from our list (Thompson, 1958:16). Although J.H. Keys was a highly competent coleopterist, it seems likely that the species in question was really *O. affinis* Sturm.)

Lucanus cervus L.: p.196. The Stag Beetle had, up to 1906, occurred twice in S.E. Cornwall: Mount Edgcumbe (2) and Saltash (1); probably, as Clark comments, casual strays. Whether there are later records I am unable to say.

Aphodius sturmi Harold: p.196. The specimen taken by Keys at Whitsand Bay (near Devonport) in 1902, remains unique as British; its true status in our fauna thus remains an open question (see Allen, 1967:224). However after nearly a century without further records, the presumption of adventive origin becomes strong. Clark's statement contains a curious error: he ascribes the identification to a "Herr Bourkill". How Frank Bouskell (the actual identifier) would have viewed this strange metamorphosis, we can but surmise!

Pleurophorus caesus (Creutz.): p.196. The occurrence of this great rarity in the Scilly Islands is hardly well-known; as Clark states here, two or three (four in the Dale collection at Oxford, according to J.J. Walker) were found on Tresco by C.W. Dale in October, 1890. That year saw the publication of "Fowler" vol.4, so the record was in any case too late for inclusion. There was an example from Tresco (no date) in the G.C. Champion collection. It cannot, of course, be ruled out that the beetles had resulted from an introduction with exotic plants. Clark does not mention the record by Leach from Pentire Point, near Padstow, whence Stephens recorded *Aphodius scrofa* (F.).

Psammodius porcicollis (Ill.): p.196. At Whitsand Bay, the chief British locality, it was eventually found in some quantity, always very locally, by Walker and later by Keys. I quote from the latter's remarks as given in Clark's note: "I find it in sandy places under stones on the cliffs and at roots . . . extremely sluggish in its

movements . . . I once took twenty several inches down in the soil". Jessop (1986) places this in a genus *Brindalus*, which I prefer to regard as subgeneric. (The ever-growing tendency to multiply genera on minute or trivial differences must surely be resisted.)

Donacia simplex F.: p.198. "The larva of this insect in 1903 and 1904 destroyed a number of leaves of the Arum lily by eating inside the petiole"; scarcely a normal larval pabulum for any of the reed-beetles. (Query: are similar instances known?)

Meloe autumnalis Ol.: p.200. "Valley of the Lynher". More detail would have been welcome for this very rare and seldom recorded oil-beetle.

Meloe rugosus March.: p.200. "Looe valley". Likewise no Cornish record in Hyman & Parsons.

Meloe brevicollis Panz.: p.200. "Saltash; on the moors above Liskeard". ("E.Cornwall" in Hyman & Parsons is due to a record of mine from Millhook.)

Sitaris muralis Forst.: p.200. "This extremely interesting species has occurred sparingly for the past three years in a very restricted area not far from Truro about the nests of *Anthophora*. On 14 April, 1904, a female bee was caught with several of the early stage larvae of *Sitaris* attached to the body hairs." The Cornish record seems as unknown today as several others listed in this paper. Not known to have been seen in Britain since 1969.

Ceutorhynchus syrites Germ.: p.202. "Padstow (Lamb)". A very rare species with us, for which Hyman & Parsons give eight county divisions. They include W.Cornwall in its distribution; but because of the location of Padstow, that can hardly refer to C.G. Lamb's find.

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